HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR RADIO (Original Scripts)

Series 1. Episode 14. The Sheikh

TONY HANCOCK

with

MOIRA LISTER, BILL KERR & SIDNEY JAMES

in

"HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR"

No.14

with

KENNETH WILLIAMS

INCIDENTAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WALLY STOTT & RECORDED BY THE BBC AUGMENTED REVUE ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY HARRY RABINOWITZ

SCRIPT BY: RAY GALTON & ALAN SIMPSON

ANNOUNCER: ADRIAN WALLER

PRODUCED BY - DENNIS MAIN WILSON

REHEARSAL: MONDAY 31st JANUARY 1955: 2.00-5.00pm. PICC 1.
11.00pm. PARIS

RECORDING: MONDAY: 31st JANUARY 1955: 11.15pm-12.15am. PARIS

TRANSMISSION: TUESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 1955: 9.30-10.00pm. LIGHT

REPEATS: SATURDAY 5th FEBRUARY 1955: 10.30-11.00am. GOS

SUNDAY 6th FEBRUARY 1955: 3.15-3.45pm. GOS

CONTINUITY
(Live) : THIS IS THE BBC LIGHT PROGRAMME

GRAMS: (ON RED LIGHT) "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 1

ADRIAN: We present Tony Hancock with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr and Sidney James in....

GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 2

TONY: (ALL EXCITED - BREATH) "Hancock's Half Hour".

GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - Part 3

ADRIAN: What does a comedian do in his spare time...when he's not working on radio and he's not appearing on the stage? Well Tony Hancock's favourite relaxation is an evening at the cinema, a luxury he allows himself whenever he can afford it....and subject to the flavour of the month being strawberry. Last week both these events coincided and so one afternoon our hero rose early from his bed and went down to the High Street to meet Moira.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" (UP & UNDER)

CROSSFADE TO

EFFECTS: (STREET NOISES)

TONY: (HUMMING TO HIMSELF) Ah, hallo Moira.

MOIRA: (ICY) You're late.

TONY: Ah yes, I know. I'm sorry about that. I wound me alarm clock up before I went to bed but when I got up I found it'd run down.

MOIRA: Ooh, you are lazy.

TONY: Why?

MOIRA: That's an eight day clock.

TONY: That was not laziness Moira. I didn't lay in bed for eight days because I wanted to.

MOIRA: Then why did you?

TONY: Business reasons.

MOIRA: What business?

TONY: I press trousers, shilling a pair.

MOIRA: Well come on, let's hurry or we'll miss the big picture.

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS UNDER)

TONY: Ah yes, the picture. Tell you what, we'll go in the back row tonight, then next week we'll nip South of the River and see what it was all about.

MOIRA: Ah - think of it - you and I all alone in the dark, just the two of us, no-one to bother us and.....

BILL: (COMING ON) Hiya Tub, sorry I'm late. Hi Moira.

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS STOP)

TONY: And just what are you doing here?

BILL: I knew you and Moira were going to see a movie, so I thought it would be nice if I came along with you.

TONY: Did you? Yes, jolly good, you'd enjoy that wouldn't you....ha ha. (CLENCHED TEETH) Hoppit.

MOIRA: No, don't go Bill, by all means come along. We'd love to have Bill with us wouldn't we Tony.

TONY: Yes...of course...good old Bill....nice lad...he can sit downstairs, then I can drop me choc ice wrappers on him.

BILL: Well, what film are we going to see?

TONY: It didn't matter till you turned up.

MOIRA: I thought we might go to the Playhouse.

BILL: What's on?

MOIRA: The new Martin & Lewis picture.

TONY: We'll buy some tomatoes before we go in.

MOIRA: Don't be so silly Tony.

TONY: Well what do we have to go and see Martin & Lewis for? They're making enough money without my two and three. I'm not going. There's something about them that irritates me.

BILL: They're very funny.

TONY: That's it. Besides I want to go to the Bioscope.

MOIRA: What's on there?

TONY: Episode six of "Bat Man meets Dragon Lady". Isn't half good. She's got him trapped in the atomic radiation chamber, and she's just going to throw the lever and disintegrate him when Zog the green one-eyed King of the Martians turns a bit umpty and shoves her in as well. Just then Captain Universe arrives in his space ship with his assistant Harry, who isn't really Harry but sinister Doctor Van Shelt the ruthless scientist from the foreign power who is after the plans of the deadly death ray gun. Will Captain Universe arrive in time to save Bat Man from the dreaded clutches of Dragon Lady? Or will Zog and Doctor Van Shelt....

BILL: Tub, are you interested in all that tripe?

TONY: No..but the ice cream girl fancies me. I think I'm alright there if I play me cards right. She's been looking at me.

MOIRA: Well forget about her, we're going to see Martin & Lewis.

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS & TRAFFIC)

TONY: Alright. As long as you wake me up when the adverts come on. I want to see them toffees wrap themselves up and nip into that cardboard box.

EFFECTS: (BACKGROUND TRAFFIC & SMALL CROWD)

BILL: Well, here we are, this is the place. Martin & Lewis in "Three Ring Circus".

TONY: Look at all those pictures outside. Just look at Lewis. Stupid suit on. Hair been gone over with a Tongue in his upper lip again. Great big boots. Makes you sick. People'd laugh at me if i looked like an ape.

BILL: Yeah, I noticed them on the way over.

TONY: Alright, thank you. Just because I can pick up fag ends when I bend down. Don't get personal.

MOIRA: Well come on, let's go in.

TONY: Oh...yes..of course. Er...that's the box office over there Bill.

BILL: Oh yes, so it is.

TONY: Yes. That's where the person who's paying buys the tickets.

BILL: Really?

TONY: Yes. (STARTS HUMMING TO HIMSELF)

BILL: (JOINS IN HUMMING)

TONY: The picture starts in a minute.

BILL: I believe it does.

TONY: Can't get in without tickets.

BILL: No.

BOTH: (SLIGHT PAUSE. START HUMMING AGAIN)

MOIRA: (SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE) Three one and nines please miss.

TONY: Good girl.

KENNETH: Tickets please. Have your tickets ready. Four and six. Thank you. Three and nine. Thank you. Two and six. Thank you.

TONY: Three one and nines.

KENNETH: One and nines? Tear <u>them</u> up yourself, I'm not touching those.

BILL: Well you can get your torch out and show us to our seats.

KENNETH: Show you to your seats. You're expecting a lot for one and nine aren't you? I'm not going down <u>there</u>. It's not safe. Find your own way down.

TONY: Alright, where do we go?

KENNETH: Straight down the centre aisle.

BILL: How far?

KENNETH: Just keep going, then ask the organist, he'll direct you. Tickets please. Have your tickets ready....(FADES HIMSELF)

MOIRA: Come on boys, through the curtains.

EFFECTS: (SANDY McPHERSON RECORD)

TONY: Hallo, we've got Sandy in. Look at him - all teeth and feet. Hallo here come the slides. Mr. Sandman - there he goes. Changing colour and going down.

BILL: Come on, we'll sit here.

KENNETH: Just a minute you. I saw you. Come on out from there.

BILL: But Usher I -

KENNETH: Come out. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

BILL: Well how was I to know where the one and nines finish and the eight and sixes start.

MOIRA: Don't argue with him Bill, let's find a seat. Quick, the lights'll be going down soon.

TONY: Ah, there's a space in this row. Excuse me. Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse me. Thank you. (YELLS) Madam why don't you go <u>home</u> and knit. Excuse me...

ALAN, SIDNEY &
KENNETH: Siddahn etc. Ssshhh.

TONY: We've got to get in. I've paid. What's the matter with you? Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse me. Well here we are. Oh.

BILL: What?

TONY: This space.

BILL: It's the other gangway. Let's go back. Excuse me. Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse...Granny, this is no place to peel potatoes. Thank you. Excuse me...

ALAN, SIDNEY &
KENNETH: Siddahn, shut. Sssssshhhhhhh etc.

TONY: Hold me coat. Come out in the gangway you. Cos you've picked on the right boy here - I can tell you.

MOIRA: Tony.

TONY: I'll knock him back into the three and nines. A quick left and he won't know what...

MOIRA: Tony, be quiet. Hurry up and find a seat and behave yourself.

TONY: Oh alright. Excuse me. Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse me. Do you mind. Yes - you. Stop nibbling her earhole and let me get by. Thank you. Excuse please. Thank you.

MOIRA: Do sit down Tony.

TONY: Ah, here's a seat. Aah, that's better. (PAUSE) Moira, can I change places with you. I'm sitting behind a bloke with a big head.

MOIRA: Oh hurry up then.

TONY: That's better. (PAUSE) Me shoe! Lost me shoe! Where's me casual? Must have me casual! Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse me -

ALAN, SIDNEY &
KENNETH: Siddahn, shut up etc.

TONY: I'm warning you lot, I'll be over the top of these seats and in amongst you in a minute.

MOIRA: (FIRMLY) Tony. Sit down.

TONY: Well....only casuals I've got. I stuffed the newspaper in the toe like he said.

MOIRA: Honestly - this is the last time I come to the pictures with you.

TONY: Oh alright. (PAUSE) Moira.

MOIRA: What is it now.

TONY: I'm sitting next to that bloke what's nibbling that girl's earhole. I want to move again.

MOIRA: Why?

TONY: He's started on mine. Me lobes are positively frayed.

BILL: Hey Tub, why don't you keep quiet? The Martin & Lewis picture's just starting.

TONY: Oh yes. 'This is to certify that "Three Ring Circus" has been passed'...well, dropsy for the censor, you can get anything by.

OMNES: Sssssshhhh.

EFFECTS: (SOUNDTRACK TITLE MUSIC & CREDIT TITLES)

TONY: Here we are. Credit titles. Be the best bit in the film, you watch. Hallo. Assistant make-up man, Charlie Hancock. Old Uncle Charlie. I didn't know he was out. Make-up eh? Still he was always good at disguises. Directed by..... Right, here we go.

KENNETH: (GUFFAWS)

TONY: (QUICKLY) They haven't started yet!

EFFECTS: (OPENING SOUNDTRACK OF "3 RING CIRCUS")

TONY: Right, wake me up when the toffees come on.

EFFECTS: (SOUNDTRACK CONTINUES ALONE FOR A FEW SECONDS)

TONY: (SNORES)

EFFECTS: (GALE OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: (QUICKLY) What happened, what happened?

BILL: He fell down.

TONY: Did he break a leg?

BILL: No.

TONY: I have to, to get a laugh. Look at Lewis up there. That hair. Look at the way it's cut. Tyson'd give a fortune to bowl on that lot.

EFFECTS: (GALE OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: What did he do then? What did he do then? What was funny about that? You. Take your teeth out of her earhole for a minute and...oh you didn't see it did you? You there. What did he do then? Go on tell me, what was funny about that?

MOIRA: Oh Tony - sit down!

EFFECTS: (BIG CRASH)

TONY: Me seat! Who let me seat up?

OMNES: Ssssshhhhh! Quiet!!

EFFECTS: (SOUNDTRACK STILL GOING ON. GALE OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: What are they laughing at now? Stupid lot. I wish this was in 3D. If he fell down here I'd kick him right back in again.

KENNETH: Quiet!

TONY: Aah.

EFFECTS: (TWO OR THREE VERY BIG GALES OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: I don't know how they get away with it. I'm not laughing.

BILL: Ah, here comes the sad bit. Oh she's told him he's ugly.

TONY: Three quarters of an hour and she's only just noticed it.

EFFECTS: (SAD SOUNDTRACK MUSIC)

TONY: About time somebody clumped him isn't it? There you are, they have. Pathos that is - throw him a peanut.

MOIRA: Oh, look at him now, all alone with no-one to talk to.

TONY: He'll sing in a minute, or his mate will.

MOIRA: Pass me my handkerchief Tony. Oh poor Jerry.

TONY: (MIMICS HER) Poor jerry, poor Jerry. Half a million a year. (MIMICS) Poor Jerry. Where's me tomatoes.

BILL: Quiet Tub.

EFFECTS: (GALE OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: Hallo, somebody's hit him again. I'm sorry, I just can't see it.

EFFECTS: (MORE LAUGHTER)

TONY: (JOINS IN VERY FORCED & SARCASTIC) Cor dear.

EFFECTS: (LAUGHTER) INTO.....

GRAMS: LINK

TONY: Oh, it makes you cry.

GRAMS: SAD LINK

EFFECTS: (GALES OF LAUGHTER COMING OUT OF LINK)

CROSSFADE TO

EFFECTS: (FOOTSTEPS ON PAVEMENT)

BILL: Ah, what a great film. I've never laughed so much in all my life.

MOIRA: Oh it was funny wasn't it. That bit where Jerry Lewis got mixed up with the custard machine.

BILL: (GUFFAWS) Yeah. How about that? Trying to get the stuff in the cups and slopping it all over their clothes. Brilliant. A touch of genius that was.

MOIRA: There's no doubt about it, they're a very funny couple.

BILL: Yeah. I thought I would die laughing.

TONY: You nearly did, I had me fist handy.

MOIRA: Tony, haven't you got over it yet? You haven't stopped grumbling since we left the cinema. You've spoilt our entire evening.

TONY: Well I made up for it, didn't I? I took you out to dinner.

MOIRA: Yes. have another chip Bill.

TONY: (SCORNFUL) Martin & Lewis.

MOIRA: Tony please. This attitude of yours is ridiculous. You just won't admit that anybody might be funnier than you. You never give another comedian credit where it's due.

TONY: That's not true Moira. I've got nothing personal against Mr. Lewis. He's a very nice fellow. We get on very well together. He's a gentleman. One of the few people who answer me begging letters. Always good for a couple of quid old Jerry. I wouldn't mind how successful he or any of the others were if only they'd give me a chance.

MOIRA: What do you mean? You're in a stage show and you've got your own radio series.

TONY: I know..but nobody wants me to make a film. That's what narks me. It's not only Martin & Lewis. They're all at it. Frankie Howerd, Max Bygraves, Arthur Askey, Harry Secombe, Peter Sellers. They're all making films except me. It's ...it's not fair.. (BREATH)

BILL: But you had a film offer the other week and you turned it down.

TONY: Of course I turned it down. <u>You</u> know what the film was.

BILL: Yeah. Moby Dick.

TONY: And you know what they wanted to do.

BILL: Yeah. Drill a hole in the top of your head...but at least it was a big part. <u>And</u> a chance to travel.

TONY: Travel. Swimming round icebergs in this weather. Not this lad. I want to make a film like all the other comedians. Nobody'll give me a chance. They're all against me, that's what it is. I'm being persecuted. It's Keep Old Hancock Out Movement. They're frightened of me, you see, that's what it is, they're frightened of me. There's that atmosphere everywhere I go. There's a conspiracy. They don't like me. I can't count on anybody. They're all against me. I'm all alone like Humphrey Bogart and his strawberries.

BILL: Oh, have another chip and stop moaning.

TONY: Oh alright I....hallo what's this?

MOIRA: Where?

TONY: Next to the advert column.

BILL: A piece of rock salmon.

TONY: I know, but look at that bit of paper that's stuck to the batter. Look what's printed on it. Under sits. vac. fifteen bob a line.

BILL: Show (READS) Film Star Wanted. No experience required. Good opening for keen lad. Good wages. Trade Union rates. Canteen facilities. No Saturdays. Apply De Luxe Film Studios. Box 84.

TONY: This is me big chance. I'll answer the advert. Me, a film star. No, I'm sorry Ranky, you'll have to get someone bigger than Jack Hawkins for me second lead. Love scene with Ava Gardner? I'll think about it. All right, I've thunk, bring her on. How about the contract. Million a picture, one picture a year'll do to start with and then...

MOIRA: Just a minute, Orson. How do you know this advertisement is genuine? People don't advertise for film stars in newspapers. The whole thing smells fishy.

TONY: Look where it's been.

MOIRA: It's suspicious. It can't be any of the big studios.

TONY: If I wait for the big studios to spot me I'll be playing one of A.E. Matthew's grandads.

MOIRA: What do <u>you</u> think Bill?

BILL: Well, as Tony's best friend I'd say proceed with caution and disregard it, as it might jeopardise his whole career, but as his business manager and agent I'd say there might be a few quid in it for me, so let's take a chance huh?

TONY: Right. Tear the advert out, we'll get down there first thing in the morning.

GRAMS: TIME AND MOVEMENT LINK

TONY: Well, according to the bus conductor, this is the place.

BILL: It's a funny place to have a luxurious film studio. Over the top of a greengrocer's shop.

MOIRA: I think we go through this side door, next to the shop.

BILL: What does it say on those name plates?

TONY: Where are we? (READS) Z. Glinkelburg & Son, Wholesale schmutta, basement. Fred Higgins and Co., Used car battery buyers, 1st floor. Anglo-French literature Co., er....closed down..ah here we are. De Luxe Film Studios, top floor. Come on, up the stairs.

FX: FOOTSTEPS UPSTAIRS - SLIGHT ECHO (ECHO ON DIALOGUE TOO)

BILL: Mind your coats on the wall. That distemper rubs off.

TONY: Mind how you tread. The stair-rods holding those potato sacks down are a bit loose.

MOIRA: (DISDAIN) De Luxe Studios. And we have to walk up the stairs in single file.....sideways.

TONY: It's probably very nice once you get inside the office.

BILL: Hold on, I can't see where I'm going. You'd think they'd have lights in this place.

TONY: There's a window, draw back those heavy curtains.

BILL: Draw 'em back yourself, they're cobwebs.

TONY: Wait a minute, there's a gas bracket up there. Ah, that's better.

BILL: We'd better duck along this corridor, I think this is bat country.

TONY: Just one more flight of stairs. Mind those dustbins. Ah, here we are. De Luxe Film Studios. Walk straight in. Honestly, if I didn't know he was in Dartmoor, I'd say Sid James runs this place.

FX: DOOR OPEN

SIDNEY: Good morning.

TONY: (ALOUD) He's escaped.

SIDNEY: Well well, Hancock I.....

TONY: (CLENCH TEETH) What's the matter, didn't you like the pantomime they put on for you?

SIDNEY: Now, now, Hancock, anybody would think **you** weren't pleased to see me.

TONY: So it's films now is it? And what poor idiot has financed you this time?

SIDNEY: Nobody yet. I'm still waiting for someone to answer my advert.

BILL: You mean you haven't got any money?

SIDNEY: No. I haven't eaten for three days. As the saying goes, I'm desperately in need of succour.

TONY: Yes, well never mind about that, I've come here in answer to your advert.

SIDNEY: The sucker has been provided. Siddhan, sign here.

TONY: Wait a minute, wait a minute, what's this?

SIDNEY: A contract signing you up to star in my next film.

TONY: Hear that? Star. What did I tell you. The man knows. As soon as I stepped into the room he recognised me for what I was. Star quality me. Oh you lucky filmgoers. Do you realise, this could put television back six years. Where do I sign?

MOIRA: Just a minute, are you going to sign him up without even giving him a screen test?

SIDNEY: Eh?

MOIRA: A screen test.

SIDNEY: What's that?

MOIRA: You're the film producer, remember?

SIDNEY: Oh, a screen test. Of course. Hancock, get behind that screen. Perfect. Sign here.

BILL: But you couldn't see him.

SIDNEY: I know, if we can only keep it that way we can make a fortune. Now sign here, and hurry up. I'm only renting this place by the hour.

TONY: All right. Anthony A. St. John Hancock, 2. There.

SIDNEY: Congratulations. De Luxe Films first star. Now then, money. Let's say ten thousand nicker for the first film. All right?

TONY: Certainly.

SIDNEY: Of course, I'll offer you much better terms for the second film.

TONY: Good.

SIDNEY: That'll only cost you <u>five</u> thousand nicker.

TONY: Cost? Me? Pay you? I'm not having that I...

SIDNEY: It's in the contract.

TONY: It's not. No mention of it.

SIDNEY: Have you looked under the twopenny stamp?

TONY: No.

SIDNEY: Well, shut up then. Now then...

TONY: I'm not paying you to star in your films.

SIDNEY: You'll get your money back in royalties.

TONY: They won't go.

SIDNEY: I mean percentage on the takings. It'll be shown at all the big cinemas up and down the country.

BILL: And just how are you going to manage that?

SIDNEY: Easy. I've got one of my boys working for M.G.M. He drives the van that delivers the films.

TONY: Well?

SIDNEY: Pair of scissors, pot of glue, we'll have you smack in the middle of one of Rock Hudson's pictures.

TONY: That's a good idea. 'Cos it'd take a quick eye to spot the difference you know. I'm a devil when I'm stripped off.

SIDNEY: Right. I want you at the film studios first thing in the morning to start shooting.

MOIRA: And pray where are the studios?

SIDNEY: Up in the attic. Mind you, from time to time, you'll be needed for some location shots. You know, the open air stuff.

TONY: Ah, that's me 'ammer. Africa, Spain, Egypt? Up the Nile, out in the desert?

SIDNEY: No. Up the ladder, out on the roof. Now then...the story. What sort of film do you fancy?

TONY: Something to make 'em laugh.

SIDNEY: Starring you. Hmmmm. How about "Hamlet".

TONY: "Hamlet's" a tragedy.

SIDNEY: It will be with you in it.

BILL: As Tony's agent, I feel that he should be given the chance to display all the talents nature has given him.

SIDNEY: Too late. "Animal Farm's" been done.

TONY: Look, it's quite simple. Having frequently admired me handsome features in various shop windows, I don't think we can go wrong if we do a remake of some of Valentino's stuff.

BILL: Oh, like "The Shriek".

TONY: Sheikh.

BILL: I'm talking about the audience.

SIDNEY: The Sheikh eh? That's romantic. But what about the comedy?

TONY: Oh, time enough for that when I'm old and ugly.

SIDNEY: Blimey, we'd better get weaving on this one.

BILL: Of course you realise if you're going to make "The Sheikh" you've got to have a leading lady.

TONY: No problems. Moira?

MOIRA: Only if I can wear a veil. No-one must recognise me.

BILL: What about a part for me? How about a small part for lover boy Kerr. I mean after all, we've got to aim for the female market as well.

TONY: I think I can take care of that thank you William.

BILL: Oh I don't think so Tub. You haven't got the technique.

TONY: What? Me? Who can't walk down the street without women chasing me.

BILL: Well that could happen to me too if I pinched their handbags. No Tub, in this film it'd be safer if you just left the sexy stuff to me. You see I have that....indefinite something.

TONY: I can define it.....size nineteen hat. Now look - I'm doing the snogging in this lot. You wait. A twitch of the lower lip, a quick flash of the hooded lids straight into the old camera....pandemonium.

BILL: Now listen Tub I...

TONY: No - I'm doing the heavy meaty stuff.

BILL: Well you've got the build for it.

SIDNEY: Now stop fighting. There'll be a part for everybody. There's only three of you and we've got some scenes with four or five thousand Arabs..so there's going to be a lot of nipping about to do. Right, I want you up in the attic first thing in the morning to start shooting.

GRAMS: LINK

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

SIDNEY: Ah, morning all.

OMNES: Morning.

SIDNEY: Right, let's get started.

MOIRA: Where are the dressing rooms?

SIDNEY: You stay where you are and close your eyes. I'd like you to meet our cameraman. Humphrey, put your knitting down and come over here.

KENNETH: Morning. I do hope we're going to have a jolly little picture together, don't you? Because I do feel that happiness on the set does get across to the audience in the cinema, don't you? (LAUGHS)

TONY: (LAUGHS WITH HIM) Cor dear. Sid, who is he?

SIDNEY: Humphrey. An expert with the camera.

BILL: Where did you find him?

SIDNEY: On Brighton prom, business was slack, he jumped at the chance. Right, come on....Scene one. The Sheikh's tent in the middle of the desert. Humphrey, stick this broom handle up one of Hancock's spare nightshirts. Now get the fire bucket down and sprinkle the sand over the floor. Perfect. Looks just like the Sahara.

MOIRA: Yes it does, doesn't it. Apart from a few details. Like the hat stand, the fireplace and the wash basin with the geyser...but who's going to notice those, I always say.

SIDNEY: Well exactly. Right, get into position. Action.

BILL: Wait a minute, wait a minute, what about our Arab costumes?

SIDNEY: Pull your shirt out. Now...the Sheikh's tent. Billy's doing a bit of crafty snogging with the Sheikhess of Algiers....Put him down Billy, Moira's playing that part. They're interrupted by the arrival of the Sultan - That's Hancock - who fancies his chances as well. Right. Put the towels round your nuts. Here we go. Camera, ready Humphrey?

KENNETH: Yes Sidney.

SIDNEY: Then start shooting.

KENNETH: Right. Hold it everybody. Don't move. Hooooold it.

EFFECTS: (CLICK OF CAMERA SHUTTER. AUDIBLE TO STUDIO AUDIENCE)

KENNETH: Got it. Now Mr. Hancock, raise your right arm half an inch, the left arm down half an inch, put your face just a little bit nearer hers, and you Mr. Kerr, you're still in the middle of taking a step, your leg is still in the air, so lower just a fraction. Perfect. Now all hold it. Don't move. Hoooold it.

EFFECTS: (CAMERA SHUTTER AS BEFORE)

KENNETH: Perfect. Now Mr. Hancock, raise your right arm another half an inch, the left arm down another half an inch, your face a little bit nearer hers and start to purse your lips on this one. And your leg Mr. Kerr, a little bit nearer the ground. Right. Hold it.

EFFECTS: (CAMERA SHUTTER AS BEFORE)

KENNETH: Good. Now right arm a little bit higher Mr. Hancock, left arm a bit lower and -

TONY: Just a minute, just a minute. Humphrey... correct me if I'm wrong..but didn't I hear a rumour a few years ago about movie cameras?

KENNETH: You may have done but we haven't got any. We've got to make do with this baby box camera.

TONY: You mean we can only take all separate photographs?

KENNETH: Yes. Then we stick them all together, drill little holes along the edges, and Bob's your uncle.

SIDNEY: Come on, come on, we haven't got much time. Get the Arab clobber off, shove the Regency gear on.

BILL: Regency gear? In the desert?

SIDNEY: No - "Beau Brummel".

TONY: But what about the Arab picture?

SIDNEY: We've finished that. When you weren't looking.

MOIRA: Oh good. What was it like?

SIDNEY: Not bad. The plot didn't hold together very well.

TONY: Look, how can it be finished - we've only been making it for two minutes.

SIDNEY: That's long enough. We've got eight perfectly good snaps in that camera. All we've got to do now is decide what order to stick 'em together in and we've got a hit on our hands.

BILL: But Sid, that film's cost Tub ten thousand pounds and it'll only be on the screen for a couple of minutes.

SIDNEY: You don't want to bore 'em do you? (CALLS) Humphrey, nip round the chemists and get that film developed. And get two more rolls, I think we've got time to make another couple of epics. Now then, "Beau Brummel". Moira - Lady Patricia. Billy - Beau Brummel. Hancock - Prinny. Go.

TONY: What about a script?

SIDNEY: Script? Can't afford one, make it up as you go along. Scene one. Brighton Pavilion 1818. A ball is in progress. Put that record on. Action.

EFFECTS: (1920 RECORDING OF "CHARLESTON")

TONY: Hold it, hold it, hold it, hold it.

EFFECTS: (RECORD OFF)

TONY: Look, I don't want to appear temperamental but that doesn't seem to me the sort of music they would dance to in those days.

SIDNEY: Alright, we'll put another one on.

EFFECTS: ("THEY WE'RE DOING THE MAMBO")

TONY: That's better. Must have accuracy. Come children, let us rehearse.

MOIRA: Ah, your Royal Highness.

TONY: Lady Patricia. Stap me, you're lookin' most beautiful tonight. No, I think we'd better switch these lines round a bit. Start again. Ah, Lady Patricia.

MOIRA: Your Royal highness. You're lookin' most beautiful tonight.

TONY: That's it. Must have accuracy. Lady Patricia, I've arranged our rendezvous tonight here in Brighton.

MOIRA: But Sire, our identities will be discovered.

TONY: I think not. You see, I resorted to subterfuge in signing the register.

MOIRA: What did you put down?

TONY: His Royal Highness, Prince Smith.

BILL: Oh I say, what ho old things.

TONY: Curses, tis that foppish dandy Brummel.

MOIRA: Oh I don't know, I rather like him. He's quite amusin'.

TONY: I don't know why you bother with him. He's a weaklin'.

BILL: Come now Prinny, you underestimate me. I'm as tough as the next man.

TONY: Tough? Ha. Look at those clothes. Blue silken hose, green velvet breeches, bright yellow cravat, puce buckled shoes, lemon embroidered waistcoat and scented handkerchief.

BILL: Brother, when you're dressed like this you've got to be tough. Ah, Lady Patricia, may I have the next creep with you?

MOIRA: I'm afraid not Mr. Brummel. You may have the waltzes, and the minuets, but Prinny is giving me the creeps.

SIDNEY: Right - cut. That's another one finished. Get the Alpean jungle stuff on now, we're going to put Anthony Steele out of business. Hurry up, hurry up, we've got another fifteen films to make before we pack up tonight.

GRAMS: LINK

BILL: Honestly Moira, Sid's got a funny idea of how to make films. Eighteen pictures we've made in three hours.

MOIRA: Have you seen the rushes?

BILL: Yeah, there's not one more than two minutes long.

MOIRA: Well you know what his idea is. He's going to join them all together and call them "All Next Week".

BILL: Poor old Tub, he really thinks this is going to make him the biggest dramatic actor in the business. I hate to see it happen to him. He says he's finished with comedy after this.

MOIRA: Well they never did get on all that well together did they? Where is the boy anyway?

BILL: He's over there chatting to Sid's publicity agent.

SLIGHT FADE IN

TONY: ....Of course this isn't the first time I've been asked for my life story you know.
ALAN: I didn't think it was.
TONY: It's not. Lots of blokes have asked me. Mind you they were different to you. They had long wigs on. But you were saying you wanted some particular incident that you could base a story on.
ALAN: That's right.
TONY: Well of course there's many to choose from. Cos I've had a very colourful life. I've been around. I could tell you some stories - things that have happened to me - but you couldn't print them. Oh dear me no. well not in the Dailies anyway. For your own ear, yes. If you're a man of the world.
ALAN: I am.
TONY: Well we all are. We have to be. No use closing your eyes to it is it? We all know what goes on.

ALAN: What?
TONY: Eh?
ALAN: Ha ha.
TONY: I should coco. I bet you could tell me a few tales. I thought you could. We'll have to get together one day, over a beer.
ALAN: I don't drink.
TONY: Well never mind, fifty, fifty. You buy it , I'll drink it. But you want a definite experience that you can print. I've got it. The very thing. I was going out to Australia to do pantomime.
ALAN: They have pantomimes out there?
TONY: Every time they pick a test team....Ha ha - topical. Well anyway, the ship started going down..in the water that is...Well there was panic. Everybody was rushing for the boats. I could see something had to be done. So I shouted out "Women and children first", I shouted.
ALAN: Very brave.
TONY: Well it's fair. It's the right thing. I'd do it again. Cos I was lucky. I had a dames outfit on. So I was alright. Well there I was in this lifeboat, all by meself, except for a young girl who was rowing. Well after four weeks of this, I thought to meself, well you've got nothing to lose, have a go. Well I'm only human. So I plucked up courage, looked her straight in the eyes and said "Hallo". Cos I'm a quick worker you see. I'm in there. No messing. Well it's the only way. Well as soon as I spoke, she knew I was a man. Cos me voice had broken by then. Well...from then on we got on like a house. We got on very well. We'd only been rowing out together for four days when she invited me up to her end of the boat for tea. So I thought, here we are, get in lad it's your birthday. So I got dressed up...put me best bit of sail canvas on, combed me hair with a fishbone and I was up there. She was very pleased to see me. I must say she put on a lovely spread. Seaweed sandwiches and winkles. Well you couldn't ask for anything better than that could you? .....Well when we'd finished tea, I took her for a walk. We didn't go far. Well she had to be home early. Well, I don't know whether it was the romantic moon shining down upon us, or her being so close to me, or whether I'd had too many glasses of seawater...but I lost control. I kissed her. well...I've made a few conquests in my time but never one like this. Her whole being seemed to undergo a sudden change. She suddenly awakened to life. That's the only way I can describe it. Her eyes seemed to go soft, her moist dewy lips quivered in ecstasy, a beautiful flush rose to her cheeks.
ALAN: Go on.
TONY: Alright, don't get worked up. She looked up into my eyes, her whole body tensed with excitement. She flung her arms round me and drew me slowly towards her..I could feel the warmth of her pulsating heart next to mine and then do you know what happened? We were rescued.

SIDNEY: (APPROACHING) Hey Hancock, I've been looking everywhere for you. I've got some great news. I've sold the picture. They're giving it a World Premiere in the West End tomorrow night.

TONY: I'm made. The World's greatest dramatic actor. Sir Laurence Hancock straight from his triumphant season at the old nick.

SIDNEY: Right, I'll see you at the theatre tomorrow night.

GRAMS: LINK

EFFECTS: (SANDY MACPHERSON AT THE ORGAN. CROWD MURMURS)

BILL: Gee look at this crowd. The place is packed out.

TONY: They're privileged people William.

BILL: You're right Tub. They're going to see dramatic acting like they've never seen before.

SIDNEY: You can say that again.

MOIRA: Well come along boys, we'd better find our seats, it'll be starting in a minute.

KENNETH: Tickets please, have your tickets ready.

TONY: We don't need tickets, I'm in it.

KENNETH: You'll be right in it if you haven't got a ticket, now come on.

TONY: Oh alright. Er...Moira.

MOIRA: Three one and nines please.

KENNETH: Straight down the centre aisle.

TONY: Hallo, there go the lights. Come on, in this row here. Excuse me, thank you. Excuse me. Excuse me. Do you mind. Oh it's you again is it? It's a wonder she's got any earholes left. Thank you. Excuse me.

BILL: This'll do Tub. Sit down, it's starting.

PIANO: (OLD TIME SILENT FILM PIANO MUSIC)

TONY: Ah! The dawn of a new era in dramatic acting. I'm glad I've given up the comedy. This is the thing for me. Wait till they see the lad as the great lover - "The Sheikh".

EFFECTS: (GALES OF LAUGHTER. SUPPLEMENTED BY KENNETH & ALAN & SID & DENNIS)

TONY: What happened?

BILL: You've just walked on the screen.

TONY: But they mustn't laugh, this is serious.

EFFECTS: (GALES OF LAUGHTER)

TONY: What did I do then? What did I do then. What was funny about that?

KENNETH &
ALAN: Siddahn, shuttup etc.

TONY: It's you two again is it. Hold me coat. I'm offering you two out in the alley.

TONY, KENNETH &
ALAN: (GENERAL RUMPUS)

BILL: I think we'd better go Moira. This is where we came in.

GRAMS: CLOSING THEME (UP & UNDER)

ADRIAN: You have been listening to "Hancock's Half Hour", featuring the lad himself, with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr, Sidney James and Kenneth Williams. Incidental music was composed by Wally Stott and recorded by the BBC Augmented Revue Orchestra conducted by Harry Rabinowitz. The script was written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson - and the programme, which was recorded, was produced by Dennis Main Wilson.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" UP & TO END

(SEGUE)

GRAMS: PLAYOUT - TO END